

The Christie Administration's Record Of Increasing Access To Healthy Foods

CREATING INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS HUNGER IN NEW JERSEY

Combating Food Deserts: Online Ordering Initiative

The Christie Administration has spearheaded a new initiative to address urban food deserts through the use of online ordering of groceries from supermarkets. Without access to supermarkets, residents of food deserts are typically left to shop at smaller neighborhood markets, which offer less variety, more expensive groceries, and little to no healthy food options. As a result, residents of food deserts have higher chances of nutritional deficiencies.

How it works:

- A community-based non-profit organization will partner with a supermarket chain to provide online ordering opportunities for residents of food deserts at limited or no direct cost to the resident-participant.
- Participants will be provided free access to computers so that they can choose their fresh groceries for delivery, with the guidance of volunteer staff.
- The non-profit and supermarket will also provide training on a variety of related issues, including how to shop for groceries online, education on nutrition, and cooking classes.
- Deliveries will be made for all program-participants at a specified time and place, likely once or twice per week.
- The non-profit will also seek philanthropic support to help fund this program. State and city government will work closely with the non-profit and supermarket to help with publicity and outreach.
- This program will complement other anti-hunger initiatives, such as farmers markets, FreshMobile and supermarket development.

With the help of the NJ Food Council and the City of Camden, non-profit and supermarket partners have been identified in Camden, where a pilot of this program is being prepared.

Improving Access to Healthy Food with Urban Supermarkets

In March 2012, the Christie Administration launched an enhanced New Jersey Food Access Initiative to improve access to healthy food and provide new jobs and business opportunities for local residents. This year, the fund received a \$12 million investment from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, quadrupling the state's investment and making these projects viable.

The Food Access Initiative is just one piece of the state's work bringing supermarkets to our urban communities. Other programs include:

- The Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Program led to the Gateway Transit Village and Wellness Plaza project in New Brunswick, which created the first grocery store in downtown New Brunswick in more than 20 years.
- The Bipartisan Economic Opportunity Act of 2013 includes several provisions that will allow for additional incentives for retail, supermarkets and solutions to food deserts, specifically in Camden, Elizabeth, Newark and Paulsboro.

FreshMobile

The bipartisan "New Jersey FreshMobiles Initiative" pilot project was signed into law by Governor Christie in 2012. It establishes mobile units that can bring fresh fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products to residents of food deserts.

Increasing Participation in Nutritional Assistance Programs

The Christie Administration has started an aggressive awareness and enrollment campaign for New Jersey's Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Program (WIC).

Following Superstorm Sandy, Governor Christie secured federal waivers that made food assistance available to recipients of SNAP in New Jersey's most affected counties. In April 2013, Governor Christie signed into law the "New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Provider Demonstration Project Act," which helps provide food stamp recipients with job training funded by private foundations with matching grants from the federal government. As of August 2013, the number of people receiving SNAP benefits is 863,642.

Increasing Access To SNAP

- The Departments of Human Services and Health are working together to match Pharmaceutical Assistance for Aged and Disabled data with SNAP to increase participation among seniors.
- In 2011, New Jersey received a bonus award from the federal Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) for most improved Program Access Index.
- The Christie Administration has encouraged farmers markets to accept SNAP benefits.

Providing Needed Nutrition For Women And Children

New Jersey WIC Services provides supplemental nutritious foods to pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children up to the age of five.

- WIC has an average monthly participation in New Jersey of 168,631.
- There are 135 permanent and satellite WIC clinics statewide in all 21 counties. More than 800 retail grocery stores are authorized to accept WIC checks.
- New Jersey WIC Services have an infant formula rebate contract with Mead Johnson Nutritional. The rebate dollars are used to serve an additional 40,000 WIC eligible applicants at no cost to taxpayers. There are currently 919 authorized retail food stores with a three year contract.

Providing Healthy Food Options For New Jersey's Hungry

State Food Purchase Program (SFPP)

SFPP distributes funds quarterly to the state's six food banks to purchase healthy food, with a high priority on buying locally grown produce from New Jersey farmers. Through SFPP, non-profit organizations may apply for Gleaning Support Program grants to help defer the cost of New Jersey-grown produce. In December 2012, Farmers Against Hunger (FAH) received a \$100,000 Gleaning Support Grant. FAH serves 7,000 people weekly during the growing season through 70 organizations, including soup kitchens, food pantries and the state's food banks.

Farm To School Week

In January 2011, Governor Christie signed an act establishing "Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week," making the last week of September of every year Farm to School Week. The week highlights and promotes the value and importance of New Jersey agriculture and fresh foods produced in New Jersey and the value and importance of fresh farm foods for children, their general health and their success in school. Promotional events take place that week at schools and in the community.

PROVIDING NEEDED FUNDS TO NEW JERSEY'S FOOD BANKS

The Christie Administration is committed to helping New Jersey's most at-risk citizens.

- Since 2010, New Jersey taxpayers have been able to donate a portion of their income tax refund or make a donation to the Community Food Pantry Fund. Money collected for the fund is administered by the Department of Agriculture and used exclusively for food purchases and is distributed to certain emergency feeding operations through the State Food Purchase Program. Over the last two years, more than \$58,000 has been contributed to the fund.
- As part of the 2011 "Season of Service," Governor Christie announced \$2 million in funding to the Food Bank of South Jersey to secure continued access to food and nutritious meals for those in need. Over their 25-year span, the Food Bank of South Jersey has provided more than 100 million pounds of food, or 76 million meals, to thousands of families, seniors, individuals, and children in need.

- In 2012, the Administration announced the awarding of \$225,610 in Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding to six major food banks in the state. The grants help the food banks better distribute and store donated food, including "Jersey Fresh" fruits and vegetables, so that more individuals in need can be served.

EAT RIGHT, MOVE MORE

The "Eat Right, Move More" program is a joint effort between the New York Jets, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the American Dairy Association & Dairy Council, Inc. to recognize schools in New Jersey that have improved their school nutrition and physical activity programs. This year there will be an emphasis on selecting the schools that are implementing school breakfast programs. Selected schools will participate in the Jets Play 60 Challenge, requiring students to log 60 minutes of physical activity every day.